1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

porary winter use. In summer such camps rarely contain heating appliances but in winter a stove is always used. Food, clothing, and bedding are commonly stored at the sides and back of a wall tent.

Since the dwelling forms so far described are often temporary and frequently moved, the Indians have, to a considerable extent, systematized the procedure of making camp. Either a man or woman may set up camp; sometimes both cooperate in the task. The first objective is to find a level piece of ground. Former campsites are generally avoided as is the brush close to such a site, since this area has probably been used for toilet purposes. If the site selected is not already free of underbrush, it is cleared. The branches are cut off close to the ground and the stumps dug out. Next poles must be found. Poplar saplings, which are naturally provided with strong forks at convenient intervals, are preferred as supports for the ridge pole. The ridge pole is generally a slim, straight, red spruce. After these poles have been cleaned of branches, and, in the case of the ridge pole, of rough bark, they are transported to the camp site. The front and rear poles, designed to support the ridge pole, are here sharpened with an ax. In this process the circular trunk is tapered to a point by being axed on four surfaces. The pole is then thrust into the ground until firmly anchored. The tent is slipped over or tied to the ridge pole and the latter fitted into the forked supports.

Camp making presents different problems in a spruce forest lacking poplar. Spruce trees do not have strong forking branches. Hence, instead of being supported in a forked stick, the rear of the ridge pole is sometimes lashed or nailed to a conveniently located spruce tree while in front of the tent two spruce saplings are crossed, thrust into the ground, and lashed. The ridge pole is then placed into the crotch. In winter, when the ground is frozen, a tent is erected with poles which are simply crossed and lashed without being anchored in the ground.

After the tent is erected, the ground inside the dwelling and immediately in front of the entrance is covered with spruce brush. The brush is placed with the thicker end of the branches extending in one direction—either toward the back or side of the tent. Subsequent branches are partially thrust under the brush already laid.

During fair weather, if people stop traveling in the early part of the day, tents are not erected until nearly nightfall. Fire, however, is made immediately and sometimes brush is put down to make sitting on the ground more comfortable.

Tent frames. We come now to relatively more permanent shelters. A tent frame consists essentially of a four or five strip wall tent set inside four walls made of horizontal poles. The walls are a little over two feet high and usually contain a door. In summer, tent frames of lumber are sometimes used in Lower Post but generally tent frames are made of logs and used primarily as winter dwellings by a family which lacks a cabin. They are usually constructed by men; a widow, however, may build her own tent frame. The following observations give the procedure followed in tent frame construction.

9:23:45 (Old Man's Place). Hans Donnelly used green jackpine poles, averaging about four inches in diameter, for his tent frame. He cut the poles about one-eighth of a mile from the campsite and packed them home on his shoulder. His brother Donald (14) fitted the poles and put them in place. The corners were joined in bowl shaped trenches which were chinked with moss

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

●361

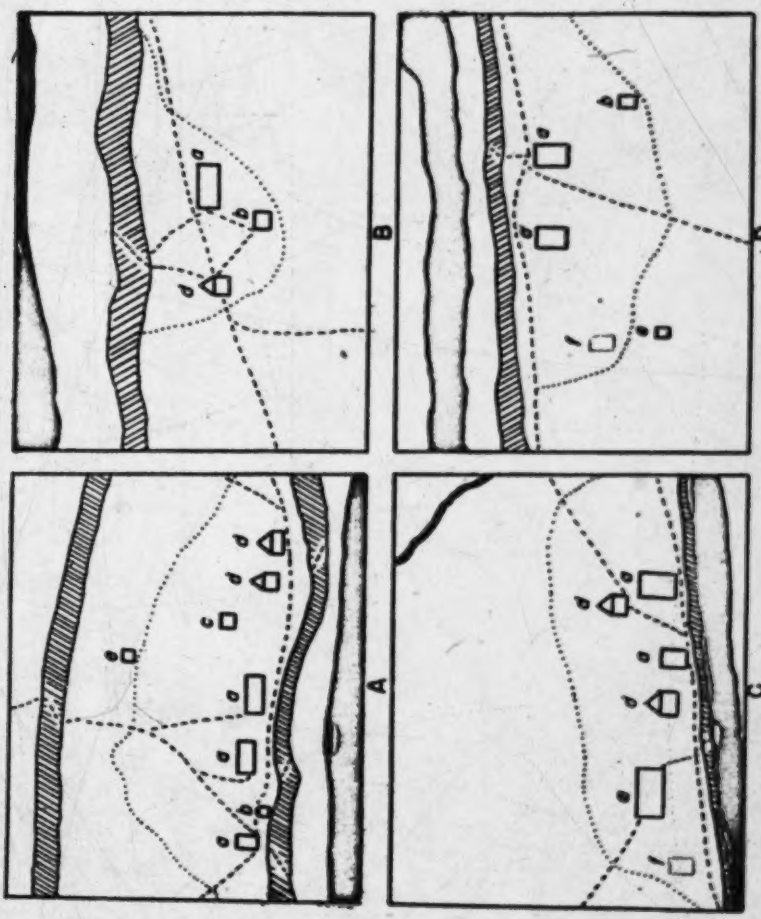


FIG. 5. Four Winter Settlements (Upper Liard River): A, Old Man's place; B, Louis Maus's; C, Old Kean's; D, River Joe's. (a, Cabin; b, Walled cache; c, Open cache; d, Tent frame; e, Latrine; f, Burial place. Broken lines show trails; dotted lines represent the limits of cleared area.)

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

and carefully whittles it to a smooth round surface. About seven inches from either end he tacks a piece of cardboard or tin, about three inches long and two inches wide. This makes a narrow platform. On one edge of this platform a bit of bait, such as rice or bacon rind, is placed. The stick is then fitted into holes cut in the sides of a four gallon oil-can, from which the top has been cut away, and about half filled with water. A mouse running out along the stick to reach the bait must step on the platform. The weight of the animal causes the platform to upset plunging the mouse into the water. When the trap failed to reduce the mice in his house, Old Man one night tried to shoot these pests with a .22 rifle. He placed a little rice for bait on top of a ridge pole. Hearing a mouse approach the food his wife focused a flashlight in the direction of the animal. The mouse froze in the glare of light and old Man tried to shoot the thief. His eyesight was too poor, however, for him to kill any mice in this way.

Nonresidential buildings. A few nonresidential structures are built or used by the Indians. Such buildings include latrines, caches, and bunkhouses.

Latrines are not common. They are not built while the people live in Lower Post but are sometimes found around the home cabins. Little care is taken in their construction. They may be constructed with a piece of canvas over a frame of poles, or they may be built of log walls covered with canvas like a tent frame. Old Man dug a latrine and covered it with an old mosquito tent. He was about the only member of his family to use the structure.

A cache is found near every home cabin and is designed to afford protection to winter food stores from mice and bears. The simplest type is a platform made of two inch wide poles; it is about five feet square and rests on four posts, three or four inches in diameter and eight feet high. The goods to be cached are placed on the platform and covered with a tarp which is then tied down. More substantial caches are rectangular walled structures, about six feet wide, seven feet long, and five feet high, erected on a platform of heavy spruce poles. The platform itself rests on posts raised about ten feet from the ground. The walls of the cache are built of spruce poles, four or five inches in diameter, and fitted with a pole and dirt covered gable roof. A ladder is used to mount to the narrow platform left in front of the cache, while entrance is through a narrow opening about four feet high. The poles supporting a cache have strips of tin, ten or twelve inches wide, obtained from four gallon oil cans, nailed around them about halfway from the ground. The smooth surface of the metal prevents mice from climbing the poles.

Bunkhouses are not specially constructed but consist of cabins or tent frames which were abandoned after a new dwelling was constructed. Such shelters are sometimes used in winter by visitors to a settlement and contain little more than a stove. Guests provide their own bedding and kitchen utensils. Any unoccupied dwelling may also be used as a workshop for winter carpentering and skin work.

When Mrs. Man, a Slave Indian, first came to Old Man's settlement, she built a "tipi," such as she had been familiar with in her own country across the mountains. She utilized this structure as a workhouse and cookhouse, the open fire permitting the broiling of meat. The construction was described as a circle of closely placed poles covered with moss and dirt, and with an opening at the top for a smokehole.

Settlements. The semi-permanent winter settlement consists of a family's caches, home

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

cabin, bunkhouse, and the residences of sons-in-law. From here the people go out to hunt, fish, and trap from early fall to late spring. Such a settlement is generally identified with its oldest resident, who lives here with his family and anyone else who has been invited or accepted to trap on the owner's trap line. Due to the long period in which brush and firewood have been gathered around most settlements, the surrounding area is generally well cleared and presents a spacious open appearance in the otherwise forested environment. An attempt is made to keep the immediate environs of a settlement free of willow and other brush (see Fig. 5).

As has already been pointed out, the structures in a settlement are arranged without regard to pattern. Generally they are on one side of a worn and narrow path which skirts the river. From the settlement, trails radiate to other settlements, to Lower Post, and to the trap line. It is not unusual for settlements to be moved a short distance up or downstream and even across the river. Such moving probably occurs when the wood supply in a vicinity becomes exhausted.

Garbage and slop, which is not fed to dogs, is commonly poured over the cutbank. Behind the settlement, in the toilet brush, one encounters piles of moosehair and discarded clothing.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORTATION

The most important of the exploitative activities discussed—hunting and trapping—can be efficiently carried on only after the people have moved from the relatively populous trading center to the isolated winter settlements. Here it is once more necessary for each family to spread out across the surrounding country to intercept game and fur. Since a considerable portion of the resources derived from the environment are not directly consumed, but are exchanged for traders' food and capital goods, movement back to the trading post is also essential. In brief, Kaska society is, by adaptive necessity, extremely dependent upon mobility.

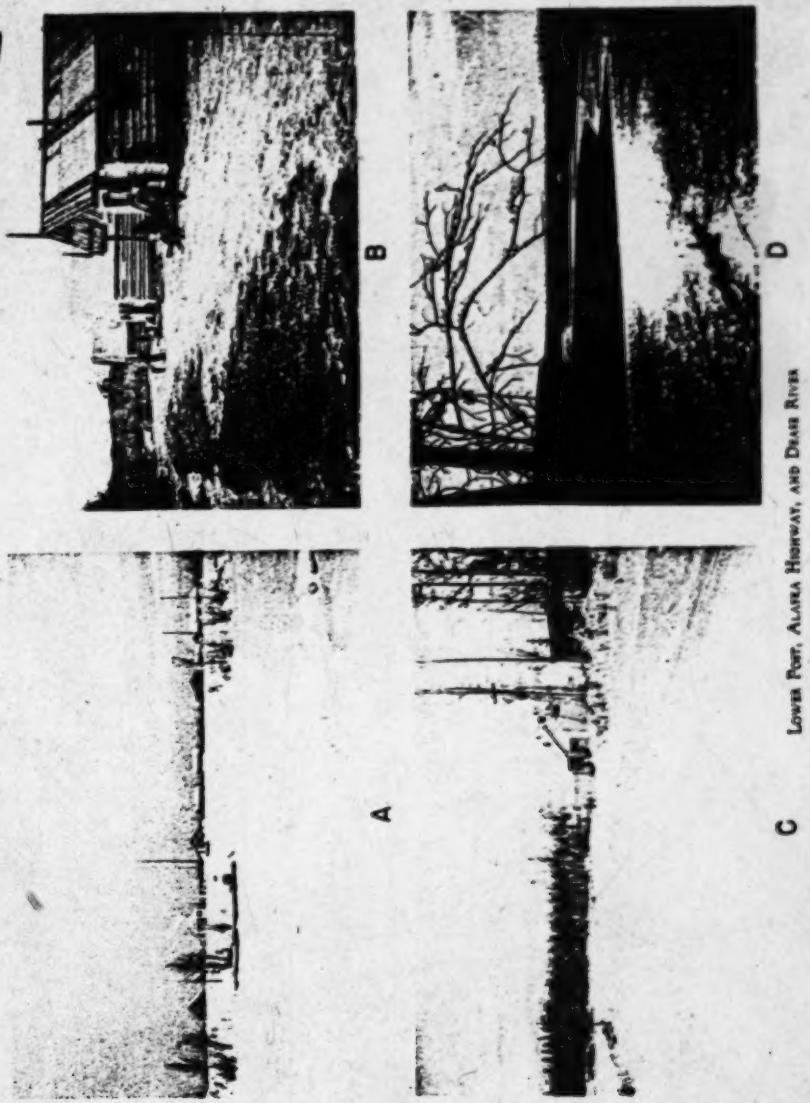
Two types of travel and transportation may be distinguished for the Indians, long distance and local movement. The first type includes the movement of people with their furs and belongings to Lower Post and their return to the winter homes with food and other supplies. The distance involved in such travel varies, depending on the tribal district and the location of the winter settlement within it. Generally in this form of transportation, goods must be hauled from fifteen to seventy miles. The second type, local movement, designates the mobility of people and goods taking place within the tribal district. Such local travel includes the movement of persons from the settlements to temporary hunting and trap line camps, to fishing sites, and to neighboring winter settlements.

In order to avoid the needless duplication of the words "travel and transportation" it may be pointed out that practically all travel involves the simultaneous transportation of goods. Similarly transportation cannot be accomplished without travel by the owner or his representative. In general a person rarely undertakes more than a day's travel without company.

Summer travel is carried out over trails and rivers. In winter people generally travel over trails, although they also utilize the frozen surfaces of rivers and lakes. Summer trails are

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

●361
341



A B C D

LOWER POST, ALASKA HIGHWAY, AND DEASE RIVER

[END PLATE 1]

131 619 in this part touching some of the sources of the Nakina. Embracing all or nearly all the small lakes at the head of Atlin Lake, it continued north easterly across the Jennings River not far from its mouth. The Tahltan thus possessed all the Nahlin, the other large feeders of the Taku from the east, and the southern sources of the Yukon which run into Teslin Lake. From the head of the latter lake or from the Jennings River their boundary ran to and beyond the water-shed dividing the waters running into the Yukon on the one hand and the Mackenzie on the other in latitude 60 N. Here it seems they claimed hunting rights on the upper Rancheria River and the whole country adjoining that stream to its junction with the Liard, where their territory ran to a point and they had a trading place. This was their most northern point. Bending back around the head of Blue River their line seems to have run south and south-easterly, crossing Dease River about the mouth of the Cottonwood and continuing across the sources of the Muddy River almost to longitude 127 W., probably the most eastern point of their territory. From here their line followed the center of the Cassiar Mountains south and south westernly between the sources of the Stikine and Finlay to the head waters of the Skeena, which they seem to have crossed somewhere to the east of Ground Hog Mountain. Continuing, their boundary followed the watershed between the Skeena and Nass Rivers to about latitude 56, (its) most southern point. Thence their line ran west crossing the upper Nass somewhere near the mouth of Cottonwood Creek, reaching the Cascades again somewhere near the heads of Bear and Salmon Rivers. It will thus be seen that the Tahltan occupied much of the headwaters of the Nass and some of the head waters of the Skeena as well as certain feeders of the Liard. It seems there may have been some overlapping of territory along Dease River, as some Tahltan claim they had right of way or control of the country down as far as McDames Creek, where they sometimes went to trade, whilst the Kaska claim they hunted the country up as far as Dease Lake. It seems the Tahltan did very little hunting below Canyon River or certainly little or none below Cottonwood River and Eagle Rivers.

131 619 ● 361 NOTE: I found it rather hard to get a full understanding of the approximate boundaries of the Tahltan, as some persons had a knowledge of some but not of others. There may have been some changing or extension of boundaries within the last 100 years in certain places owing to trade and some changing of headquarters.

Boundaries are less well defined than /those of/ tribes further south, because /the Tahltan were?/ more nomadic and /had/ no real permanent villages formerly. Also certain families through intermarriage with neighbors, especially in the east and west, appear to have ranged over and used territory of both tribes.

131
619
361